

CHAPTER 4

Gift from the Gods

A Balinese Guide to Early Child Rearing

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BALI

Bali, one of the approximately 6,000 occupied islands that constitute the tropical nation of Indonesia, is far better known to the West than are most of Indonesia's other islands. The small but densely populated island (approximately 2.8 million residents) constitutes less than half of 1 percent of the entire nation's population.

Bali's tumultuous political history is known from written records of a series of dynasties dating back to the ninth century A.D. The island's past is strongly intertwined with that of its much larger neighbor, Java; over the centuries, the two islands have frequently been united under the same leader or kingdom. From the fifth century on, traders, priests, and adventurers sailing from India and China brought to Bali and Java a variety of Hindu and Buddhist ideas and practices that were adapted and assimilated into Balinese culture.

Europeans first encountered Bali in the late sixteenth century, during the era of European exploration of the seas and massive expansion of world trade networks. Dutch sailors landed in 1597, inaugurating Dutch involvement in the region's economy that even-

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tuated in a brutal conquest of the islands that became the Dutch East Indies. During the second half of the nineteenth century, as the Dutch gradually obliterated the royal Balinese courts, the Balinese actively resisted the colonizing force. The Dutch completed their conquest of the remaining independent region on Bali in 1908.

During World War II, the Dutch East Indies was occupied by Japan. At the end of the war, led by nationalist leader Sukarno, Indonesia declared independence, an act that the Dutch first resisted with violence but reluctantly recognized in 1949. Sukarno's rule was marked by poverty and chaos, and in 1967 he was ousted by a military regime led by General Suharto. Backed by the United States, the Suharto regime was able to underwrite improvements in basic health care, food, housing, and education, thanks to rapid economic growth based largely on an oil boom. However, Indonesia's economy later plunged into crisis amidst rampant corruption and nepotism, and Suharto resigned in May 1998.

Bali is divided into eight districts, which correspond to former kingdoms. Villages within the districts contain one or more organizational units called *banjar*, of which there are approximately 4,200. The most important role of the *banjar* is to oversee death ceremonies for *banjar* members. *Banjar* also serve other purposes, such as in weddings and various political activities. Indeed, the Dutch colonial regime and then Suharto attempted to turn the *banjar* into efficient units of administration. Members construct and maintain *banjar* property, such as roads, buildings, and temples. The head of a *banjar* passes on central governmental information and directives to the community, and the *banjar* are called upon to enforce governmental laws, settle disputes, and decide upon punishment for wrongdoers in the community. However, the *banjar* also endeavor to maintain a certain level of autonomy and in some cases refuse to follow government directives that conflict with local practices.

Traditionally, the local economy of Bali was based largely on agriculture. Rice cultivation dominates agriculture; bananas, coconuts, and other fruit are also grown as subsistence crops, and coffee, tobacco, oranges, and assorted vegetables are grown as cash crops. Men are generally responsible for plowing and preparing the fields and caring for cattle, whereas women care for household gardens and pigs and may keep snack stalls at village markets. Men and

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women generally do the manual planting and harvesting together, in large groups. Nowadays, however, more and more Balinese work in government-run schools and offices and other places of paid labor. Tourism, including craft production, is becoming a major source of household income, and in some areas it dominates the economy.

Most Balinese live in villages centered around temples and public buildings. People who have moved to cities in Bali often return to the village in which they were born, to visit and to continue participating in village activities and rituals. Most villages have a market for selling and buying vegetables, fruits, pigs, chickens, and other foods as well as goods such as incense. Larger towns also have markets, as well as goldsmiths, tailors, and other merchants.

Upon marriage, a woman goes to live with her new husband's family. Family planning efforts by the government are resulting in smaller families than previously. Extended families still live together in fenced houseyards that contain several buildings, including the family temple, sleeping and sitting pavilions, a kitchen, and a refuse area where pigs are kept. Houseyards and buildings within villages are arranged so that the temples are nearest Mount Agung, an active volcano on the island thought to be the dwelling place of the gods, while the kitchen and pigsty are placed nearest the sea.

A system of social ranking imported to Bali from India, where it had its roots in the caste system, has been modified to accommodate local Balinese realities. The Balinese version includes four hierarchically ranked social groups, with the lowest-ranked group comprising the majority of the island's population. The rank of a given person is made explicit in all conversations; for example, members of a higher ranked group must be addressed by a title conveying respect by anyone of lower rank. The four groups continue to play important roles today in determining people's marriages, for wives should not rank higher than their husbands. Children generally inherit their fathers' rank (though certain circumstances may permit exceptions). However, the ranking system is somewhat fluid, and many in the lowest-ranked group are now quietly challenging their place in the system by such means as claiming ancestry in one of the two top-ranked groups.

Ninety-five percent of the population of the island practices Balinese Hinduism (although Indonesia is overwhelmingly Muslim).

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This version of Hinduism has been influenced both by Buddhism and by indigenous religious practices, such as ancestor worship and the giving of offerings to local spirits. The central tenets of Balinese Hinduism include the beliefs that every act has consequences and that one's soul is reincarnated after each death until a perfect life is attained and one's soul is unified with god. Children are believed to be gifts from the gods and are very highly valued in Balinese society.

Religious rituals are central to Balinese daily life. Cremation is particularly important: The ceremony purifies the soul, which may have accumulated impurities through evil deeds committed during present or past lives. After being purified, the soul can then be released to merge with the ancestors and a god known as Betara Guru. Eventually it is reincarnated into a new family member.

Balinese believe that if rituals are neglected, family members may become ill or suffer misfortune. In some cases, even the entire village might endure disasters such as drought or epidemics. Thus, in addition to the many village temples, each family's living area has a temple in which daily offerings are made to show gratitude toward benevolent beings such as gods and ancestors and to placate demons so they will not cause harm. Religious rituals are considered important enough that children may stay home from school and adults may stay home from work in order to participate in them. Ceremonies generally include many people, ranging from extended families to members of the *banjar*. Some public ceremonies, such as cremations of high-ranking persons, are open to the entire island of Bali and may attract thousands of observers, including many tourists (Plate 8). Both men and (to a somewhat lesser extent) women serve as priests; women are also responsible for preparing offerings used in the ceremonies.

Every Balinese person belongs to several dozen temples, each of which is devoted to a particular concern such as agricultural fertility, irrigation, death, or political loyalty. Certain days are deemed auspicious for holding religious ceremonies. Two different calendars that the Balinese use to count time – a 12-month lunar calendar and a 210-day cycle – both contain auspicious days for ceremonies, as well as inauspicious days on which certain activities should not take place. For example, every 210 days each temple celebrates a “birthday” commemorating the day it was consecrated. At this time,



Plate 8. This Balinese mother and her baby are on their way to an islandwide festival on Kuningan Day – the day the spirits and ancestors return to heaven from a temporary visit on Earth. Religious rituals and ceremonies are central to Balinese life. Photograph by Marissa Diener.

the gods that are worshiped at the temple are said to enter figurines in the temple, where they remain for three days before returning to their homes on Mount Agung. The temple members welcome and then send off the gods with ritualized dancing and music played by a gamelan orchestra.

The aesthetic impulse is well developed in many arenas of Balinese life, including religion but going well beyond; indeed, art permeates Balinese life. Tourists flock to Bali to experience the renowned dances, paintings, dramas, shadow plays, and gamelan orchestras performing music on Balinese xylophones, drums, gongs, and flutes. In some areas of Bali, people are also skilled in gold and

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silver work, woodcarving, and the manufacture of ritual objects such as musical instruments and masks.

During the last few decades, the government has developed a Western educational system, and primary school attendance is now nearly universal. All education is conducted in the national language of Bahasa Indonesian (although the Balinese also speak their own language). The influence of Western schools and other imports notwithstanding, many child-rearing practices recorded earlier in the century are still observable, especially those concerning infants and young children.

For the “manual” that follows, I propose as the fictive author a male healer, or *balian*, who is trained in traditional Balinese healing arts to cure diseases of both physical and spiritual origins.

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About the Author

I have written this manual because I am a healer, or *balian*. My family is high-ranking, and I have learned to read and write. My father and grandfather were well respected for their knowledge of the spiritual world. They learned what they know by studying the sacred palm-leaf manuscripts – our teachings written in the Balinese script, which developed from writing systems of southern India. Some healers learn their skills from a dream or vision, or they serve as an apprentice to a teacher. I am fortunate to have inherited my knowledge from my ancestors.

As a *balian*, I understand many problems. I can treat illnesses caused by what Westerners consider physical factors, such as infection; but I can also treat illnesses caused by invisible factors, such as spirits, demons and witches, sins of ancestors, and actions of gods. Therefore, in this manual I will offer advice about both physical and mental well-being – which are, in any case, inseparable.



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YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE A BABY

Congratulations, expectant mother, on the upcoming birth of your child! This manual will help you prepare for the birth and provide suggestions for child rearing. You will find it especially useful if you are a first-time mother. A single manual cannot contain all the knowledge that many generations of caretakers have acquired, so use this manual as a supplement, not a substitute, for talking about child rearing with family, friends, and a *balian*.

It is wonderful that you are becoming a parent, for your children will be a source of great joy to you, your husband, and your families. There are many other rewards of parenthood. By providing a family for your husband, you show yourself to be a good wife. Had your marriage been childless, your husband might have divorced or left you. If this is your first child, you will find that parenthood changes your political status. Your husband will have more influence in the hamlet and in the irrigation societies, temple congregations, and other organizations to which he belongs.

Sons and grandsons are especially important, for they are responsible for performing the cremation ceremony and purification rituals that will allow your soul to be liberated upon your death. Also, your children will take care of you when you are older, and they will be responsible for keeping up your houseyard temple. Neglecting the worship of one's ancestors at the houseyard temple invites disaster: Family members might quarrel or become ill, or you might lose your job or rice crop, or even suffer premature death. Be sure to make offerings thanking the gods and your ancestors for your pregnancy.

The Miracle of Life

The baby you carry in your womb originated with the intermingling of your and your husband's souls. For about 210 days after being born, your baby will be divine; even after that, your child will continue to be the reincarnation of an ancestor whose spirit came down to inhabit the fetus. Fortunately, the ancestor also remains present in the shrine in the houseyard temple. The reincarnated soul that your child possesses will affect his or her development in many ways, and it will also affect how you raise the child.

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What to Expect When You're Expecting

Although pregnancy is an event to be celebrated, you will not need to change your behavior very much. You can and should continue your daily work, whether it be in your yard, at the market, in the rice fields, or at a city job. As long as your pregnancy is problem-free, your life can go on as usual. However, you will want to take some precautions to make sure your pregnancy goes well.

Remember, for every positive force in the world, there is a counterbalancing evil force. So you must be especially careful at this time to make frequent offerings to your ancestors and the gods in order to obtain protection from the *leyak* witches. The *leyak* want to capture your blood and your unborn child to offer them to their spirit patrons, such as the goddess Durga. Placating your ancestors, gods, and the spirits with offerings and thanks will ensure your protection. You would do these things anyway, but be extra diligent about it while you're pregnant. You should also visit a local *balian* to buy a magic charm to wear on your belt or hang on your houseyard gate for extra protection against witchcraft. *Leyak* can transform their spirits into different forms at night, so do not venture outside too late, especially around midnight.

You should also make offerings to the four sibling spirits of your fetus. Four spirits, which we call the "four siblings," protect the fetus from conception until birth and beyond. At birth, the spirits are present in the blood, the amniotic fluid, the placenta and umbilical cord, and the waxy vernix coating the infant at birth. The four siblings will protect and nourish your fetus if they are treated properly.

While you are pregnant, you may have to be a bit more careful in what you eat. For example, you should not eat too much chili pepper, octopus, eggplant, mango, or dishes containing fresh blood or roasted pig. Eating too much of these foods, which we consider to be hot, could create an imbalance between hot and cold, causing you to become ill. Also, never accept food from a person who is ritually impure, such as a menstruating woman or someone who has recently had a death in the family.

When your fetus is about six months old, you should perform the traditional pregnancy ritual in order to anchor the fetus firmly in your womb. First, you and your husband will purify yourselves by undergoing a cleansing ritual. Give offerings, use holy water, and

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entreat the evil spirits away from the house. Once this cleansing ceremony is completed, you and your husband may enter the family temple and pray to your ancestors to protect and bless you and your unborn child. After this ritual, you and your husband should behave as suggested in the Hindu-Javanese epics – with a pure heart. To produce a powerful child, your husband should be calm and considerate in his thoughts and behavior. He should avoid coarse language, and he must not participate in the washing of a corpse in preparation for a cremation. He may want to let his hair grow until your baby is born (as some of our priests do after they are consecrated), for if your husband cut his hair at this time, it might somehow “cut off” the pregnancy and cause you to miscarry.

Finally, if this is not your first child, now is the time to begin weaning your youngest baby so you will be prepared to nurse your new infant.

A Word Regarding the Sex of Your Child

You are probably hoping to have a boy, knowing how important a son is for ensuring that you have a proper cremation ceremony when you die, enabling your soul to be separated from the body so that it can become an ancestor. This purification ritual will be of the utmost importance to you and your husband. A son is also necessary to maintain the house shrines to the ancestors and to carry on the family line. So, you and your husband will be quite excited if your child is a son, especially if he is your first.

Try, however, not to worry about having a girl. For one thing, worrying is very bad for you. It can weaken your spirit and make you more vulnerable to illness and witches. In the past, having a daughter was less of a problem since women had so many children that at least one was likely to be a boy. Nowadays, many women use birth control, and the government urges us to have only two children, so you might very well have only daughters. If this happens, you might try to adopt a male child, especially a nephew if your husband's brother has several sons. If your families are high ranking, it is especially important that the boy be related to your husband. Another possibility is for your daughter to marry a man who is willing to sever ties to his own ancestral shrine. Through the proper rit-

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ual, he can become part of your husband's line and take responsibility for your household shrines and perform your cremation ceremony. In this case, he would inherit your house and property just as though he were your son.

Childbirth

In the past, our young women knew a great deal about childbirth, since they were present at several births before having a child of their own. A woman's husband and other kin, as well as children she already had, were present to witness this joyous occasion. Now, however, most women on Bali give birth in obstetric clinics or hospitals.

Several days before you expect to give birth, you may want to leave your and your husband's sleeping area and move into the area on the seaward side of your compound. This will ensure that you do not defile the sacred buildings in your houseyard with the ritual impurity associated with childbirth.

In earlier times, childbirth took place squatting on a new mat on the floor of the household compound, with the assistance of a *balian* specialized in midwifery. Being on the floor helped ensure the protection and assistance of the earth goddess, Ibu Pertiwi. If need be, the *balian* healer would use spiritual powers to change the position of the infant, to ensure a relatively painless delivery.

Although fewer than half our *balian* midwives are male, there may be advantages to having one. A man has a stronger *bayu*, or spirit/life force, with which to ward off evil during delivery. In addition, *balian* midwives who are women may not perform any ritual activity while they are menstruating or after giving birth, and this could prove to be a problem. Today, many women choose to have a government-trained midwife help them give birth at a clinic. These midwives – who may also be *balian* – are usually women. Your government-trained midwife might convince you to give birth lying on a bed rather than sitting on the floor.

If the four siblings have been properly cared for through offerings and prayers during your pregnancy, they will help during your child's birth. One of the four siblings, manifested in the amniotic fluid, will open the gate of your womb for your baby to enter the

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world. Two of the other siblings, manifested in the blood and the vernix, will protect the infant on the right and left. The final sibling, manifested in the placenta, will push the infant from behind.

Welcome your baby with offerings. For their first 210 days (a full year in our ritual calendar), children are divine. Therefore, the midwife will speak to your newborn in honorific terms befitting a newly arrived god. The midwife will also put words into your newborn's mouth so your baby can thank the people present for witnessing the birth.

Birth in Wuku Wayang

Just as some days are more or less auspicious for marriage, harvesting, puppet shows, and other activities, certain days are also better or worse for a child's birth. Each day brings its own complications, but some must be dealt with immediately. For example, birth on Saturday in *Wuku Wayang*, the thirtieth week of the 210-day year, is particularly inauspicious. A child unlucky enough to be born on this day may be prone to suffer emotional distress and create trouble for others. For a child born during this time, it is of utmost importance to perform a ceremony involving carefully prepared offerings to the gods. The ceremony should also include a *wayang* shadow puppet show at night, with leather puppets behind a white cotton screen lit by a lamp. The purification ceremony and the *wayang* puppet show are likely to induce the gods to accept your atonement and confer good fortune on your child, despite the unfortunate birth day.

Impurity

Childbirth is a vulnerable time when evil spirits are sometimes able to predominate over good spirits. Although your newborn is a god, your own body, weakened by childbirth, may have become ritually unclean, so you must be isolated to avoid polluting others. After the birth of your child, you will be considered *sebel*, or impure, for a time (between forty-two days and three months, depending on local custom). During this period, you are forbidden to enter any sanctified space, including family temples, and you cannot engage in any ritual activity. If you do, you may incur a divine curse, and you and your family will suffer misfortune. Your husband will also be ritually

impure after the birth; in his case, however, it is for a much shorter period – only three days. At the end of your respective polluted periods, each of you will undergo a ritual purification. Following this ritual, you will no longer be *sebel* and will be able to enter temples and resume your lives as usual.

Twins

There is a small chance you will have twins. This is often a sign that the village is “hot” and that a purification ritual is needed. The interpretation of this event depends on several factors, such as how traditional your family priest is. A modern priest is likely to interpret religious texts to fit life today, whereas a more old-fashioned priest will probably adhere to the strict textual tradition and require an elaborate purification.

In the past, twin births (especially of opposite sex siblings) were seen as a form of incest in the womb if the mother was a member of the lowest-ranked group. This type of intimacy in the womb was considered appropriate only for the children of kings and those of high castes. An elaborate purification was required so that the parents and the village members could make amends for this incestuous event. In addition, some priests might point out that having more than one child at a time, as animals do, is subhuman and thus a grave wrongdoing.

Traditionally, the temples of the village were closed, because the entire village had been made impure by the twins’ birth. The villagers might have decided to tear down the room in which the birth occurred and carry the wreckage out of the village to the unholy land near the graveyard to be burned. The twins and their parents were banished from their village for a time, generally a month, and lived in a house built specially for them. Many watchmen, perhaps up to 50, stayed with the newborns and their parents, making noise to scare off the witches and evil spirits that live outside the village and inhabit the graveyard so they would not cause harm.

At the end of this period, there was a great ceremony to purify the village and the twins’ family and to cancel the curse created by the birth of the twins. This ceremony included many offerings to the gods as well as to the demons and evil spirits. The babies’ mother consulted a *balian* for more detailed instructions about the

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performance of these ceremonies, because any neglect of the proper ritual could bring famine to the land and disease to the village. Following the final ceremony, the twins and their parents were allowed to return to the village and resume their normal life. The temporary house they had occupied outside the village was burnt to prevent the evil from escaping.

This is just a brief outline of what occurred in earlier times at the birth of twins. Recently, our country's Department of Religion has attempted to reform or outlaw ritual purifications after the birth of twins. However, most communities agree that it is more humane to perform some rituals rather than leave the unfortunate people in a polluted state. After all, if this event is not dealt with properly, it could bring disaster on the entire village. If you have given birth to twins, your husband's brother or another male relative should immediately alert the men of the village so they can meet and decide how to deal with the crisis. Unless you are attempting to be truly modern, you will probably agree that, despite the great expense and possible illegality of the ritual, performing some type of purification is the wisest course of action when twins are born.

YOU'RE A NEW MOTHER

Placating the Four Siblings

The four siblings will influence your baby's soul throughout life, for better or for worse. Giving offerings to these spirits will help assure that they continue to protect your child against enemies and evil rather than causing sickness.

To gain the protection of the four siblings, you need to bury the placenta. If you give birth at a clinic or hospital, your husband will collect the placenta. Wash it with flower-scented water and place it, with flowers and ritual money, in a halved coconut. Join the two halves of the coconut, wrap them in a white cloth, and bury this in front of your sleeping quarters (or hang it from a tree, if that is the custom where you live). If your baby is a boy, bury the coconut to the right of the entrance; for a girl, bury it to the left. Put a large rock over the burial site, and build a fire over it. After the fire has

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burned, your husband, his male relatives, and your male neighbors will build a ceremonial altar next to the burial site. Your female neighbors, sisters-in-law, mother-in-law (and perhaps your sister and mother, if they come to visit) will help you make and arrange offerings for this important ritual. Place the offerings to the four spirits on the altar, and ask them to watch over and protect your child. Treat them with respect. Continue to provide the siblings with food you feed your child by expressing a few drops of breast-milk on the rock where the placenta is buried. When you bathe your child, put bathwater on the burial place. Thank the siblings every morning for guarding your child during the night.

Your Infant as a God

At birth, your child will be divine, closer to the world of the gods than to the human world. Having just arrived from heaven, your infant should be treated as a celestial being. Provide the attention that a god deserves, and address your child with the high language suitable to a person of higher rank. You should hold your newborn high, for gods and members of higher rank should always be elevated relative to their inferiors. For the first 210 days (or 105 days, depending on region and status), never put your baby down on the ground or floor, which is too profane for a god. Until then, your baby should be carried at all times.

If your child is born into a high rank, the ancestor who is reincarnated in the baby is likely to be particularly distinguished, so be sure to treat the child with respect. If you married into a higher ranking group than your own, you will be of lower rank than your child, requiring you to be especially solicitous.

If you don't treat your infant with respect, he or she may decide to leave the human world and return to the world of the gods. In Bali today, about 5 of every 100 infants return to the divine world before the end of their first year. Should your newborn return to the heavens after being born, you will not have to cremate the body. Since the cremation ceremony is a ritual of purification, it is not needed by infants (or young children who have not yet lost their baby teeth), as they have committed no sins or wrongdoing.

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Lepas Aon

You won't want to take your newborn infant out visiting right away. Wait until after the *lepas aon*, the ceremony to mark the "losing of the ashes" (when the knotted end of the umbilical cord dries up and falls off). This event signals the newborn's freedom from the impurity associated with being connected to the placenta. Place the umbilical cord fragment and some hot spices in a woven palm leaf container at the foot of your infant's bed. Take care to placate the gods and the four siblings properly. Make offerings such as flowers and betel nut to the evil spirits so that they will not attack the newborn, and to the gods so that they will protect your baby. You may also try putting a slice of onion on your infant's fontanel – the smell will drive *leyak* witches away.

Temperament

Your child's character is your responsibility. An infant's character is manageable and shapeable. Soon after birth, you may want to take your infant to a ritual trance specialist, or *balian matuun*, to find out which of your ancestors' souls is in the child, as well as what kind of personality he or she has. The *balian* will enter a trance so that the ancestor can speak through him or her to indicate any special requests for this lifetime – that is, things that you and your family need to do to ensure your child's successful life. For example, you might need to fulfill promises that were not completed in the previous life, or you may need to make offerings such as a roasted pig to protect against an ancestor's greed or inability to control his or her appetites or anger. If you do whatever the *balian* recommends, your child is more likely to have a good life.

Part of your child's personality and characteristics will be determined by the day of birth. Nevertheless, your baby's character is not completely predetermined. You will want to consult the *pelelintangan* chart that cross-references the five- and seven-day weeks of the Pawukon calendar. On the top of the chart, days of the five-day week are listed, and down the side of the chart, days of the seven-day week are listed. Your child's birthday will fall into one of the thirty-five days in the chart. A *balian* can tell you what the day of

the birth reveals about the child's characteristics and personality. If you are having problems with your child's personality (for example, if the child cries often), consulting a *balian* regarding the child's birth day and the spiritual forces associated with that day may help solve the problem. Through appropriately directed prayers and offerings, you may be able to change some of your child's undesirable characteristics. The *balian* can also reveal which animals, birds, and gods correspond to the birthdate, and you can make sure that your child gives preferential treatment to these beings.

Some experts say that the child's four spirit siblings unify after the child's six-month ceremony to become two spirits of the soul: the Kala and the Dewa. The spirit Kala is responsible for the child's bad thoughts, emotions, and behavior, while Dewa is responsible for good ones, as well as calmness.

Another solution to a child's undesirable character is a new name. A name can be too heavy or too light, creating an imbalance in the child's spirit. If your child cries a lot or is otherwise difficult, this might be a sign that your child is protesting an inappropriate name. A *balian* can select a new one.

Another way to improve your child's temperament is to perform a therapeutic ritual of *metubah*. This ritual involves putting a special offering of seafood by a river or under the eaves of the house. It is performed to eradicate bad traits, such as a bad temper or laziness, that have been reincarnated in your child. You may also perform this ritual when your child is older (or even during adulthood) if bad traits emerge then.

INFANCY

Naming

Your child will have several names. Immediately after birth, the appropriate birth order name will automatically be bestowed. Your first child will either be called "Wayan" (for a low-ranked child) or "Putu" (especially for a high-ranked child); your second child will be named "Madé," the third, "Nyoman," and your fourth, "Ketut." If you resist the government's birth control campaigns and have a fifth

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child, start over with “Wayan” (or “Putu”). Stillborn babies and children who have died are still counted when determining your infant’s birth order name.

In addition to the birth order name, a personal name will be bestowed at the infant’s three-month ceremony. This is an important rite of passage. You will want to gather all of your relatives for this ceremony so that you can introduce your child to them. This will be a big celebration, so it may be expensive. If you cannot afford to pay for all the rituals that are involved, you can delay some until your child’s 210-day ceremony.

At the 105-day ceremony you will announce your infant’s personal name. A Hindu priest or a *balian* will obtain various personal names through divination and will write them on pieces of palm leaf. When the leaves are burned, the name that can be seen most clearly from the charred remains or the name that takes the longest time to burn will be your child’s personal name.

Although all Balinese have personal names, they are not used much before children grow up, marry, and have children themselves. However, your oldest child’s personal name will be used by others to address you and your husband as “Mother of _____” and “Father of _____.” How you address your child depends on your relative ranks. If your child has inherited a rank from your husband that is higher than your own, you must show respect by using your child’s title plus birth order name. Others of lower rank (both children and adults) than your child must also use the little one’s title. If your rank is the same as your child’s, then you do not have to add the title to the birth order name, although you may do so to flatter your child or just for fun.

Using a child’s birth order name can sometimes be confusing if there are other children nearby with the same name; they might all be tempted to come when you call. To avoid this, you can add your child’s personal name to the end of the birth order name.

Caretaking

Emotional upsets, even minor forms of surprise from loud noises or quarreling, can weaken or endanger your child’s *bayu*, or life force.

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The very young and the old are most susceptible to afflictions of the *bayu*, so you need to treat your baby with extreme care and calm. Any physical discomfort or rough handling will further weaken an infant's already weak *bayu*, leaving the child susceptible to physical illness and evil spirits. Infants and young children are easily overcome by emotion and can become sick from getting upset. Don't let your baby fuss: Offer your breast at the first signs of awakening, before he or she is fully awake and has a chance to cry out. If there is a scary object or person around, cover the baby's face so that he or she does not become frightened.

Your infant will sleep with you at night until at least three years of age. During the day, your baby will be carried by someone most of the time, even after he or she can crawl; it is base for a baby to crawl on the ground like an animal. Hold the baby in your arms or in a sling around your body as you go about your daily business. Your infant can stay in the sling even while asleep, although you may want to pull the cloth over the child's face. If you have to put your child down to do some work, another person – your husband, a sibling, child caretaker, grandparent, aunt, uncle, cousin, or neighbor – should hold the child. Everyone loves to hold a baby.

You will probably carry your child on your left hip, leaving your right hand free. This will pin your baby's right hand to your side, so the little one may try to use the left hand to grab objects or food. You must teach the child from a very young age that the right hand is for food, asking, or offering, while the left hand is only for cleansing oneself. Be vigilant in discouraging improper use of the left hand.

Dressing

Traditionally, parents left their young children naked, wearing only a necklace given to teethe on and some bracelets and anklets for ornamentation and protection against evil. The sling in which the baby was carried would provide enough warmth. Nowadays, you will probably dress your infant in Western pants and a shirt. At first your baby will urinate on you while being held in your sling. This isn't a big deal – just change the pants and your sling, and wash off during one of your two daily baths. When your child defecates, a nearby scavenger

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dog will clean it up quickly. Eventually, your child will learn that one should defecate only in certain places, and not anywhere in the house-yard. Later, you will want to dress your child in traditional Balinese clothing for ceremonies, temple feasts, and birthdays.

Bathing

Your infant should have a bath twice a day in lukewarm water, once in the morning and once at night, just as you do. If you don't have running water in your household, you can carry water from a spring or river. When your infant is young, the bath can be given in a traditional areca-palm bark container or, the more modern way, in a plastic bucket to be used only for this purpose. Roll up your cloth sling to make a pillow for the baby's head. You may want to put red onion in the water to ward off evil spirits. A newborn will probably get cold in the bath, so be as quick as possible. Later, when your child has learned that bathing is enjoyable, you can spend longer at it. After the bath, dump the bathwater on the place where your infant's placenta is buried. This will show respect to the four siblings, so that they will protect your infant. When your baby can sit alone, the bath can be given in a plastic basin. After your child outgrows the basin, you can pour water over him or her from the tank with a ladle, just as you do when you bathe. Even if you have running water in your house, you might sometimes enjoy a pleasant bath in a nearby river or stream. After all, bath time is a good time for playing with your baby.

Feeding and Weaning

Don't feed your child the first milk that comes from your breasts; it is "hard" and indigestible. Instead, provide a porridge of boiled rice flour. Before beginning to breastfeed, express your breasts to eliminate the bad milk; customarily, this first milk should fall on the house wall. Your milk will not be sufficient nourishment for your newborn, so you will have to provide something else. Pre-chew some food like bananas and force it into your baby's mouth with your finger. Although the baby may resist, this food is a necessary supplement to breastmilk.

Feed your newborn solid food at set times during the day, but breastfeed whenever the baby seems fussy or tired. This is easy to

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do, since you will be holding and sleeping with your infant anyway. Every time you feed your child, make sure you also put food out for the four siblings.

Try to find a comfortable position for both of you when breastfeeding. Even very young infants can be held in a near sitting position in a sling. This has the advantage of keeping your infant's head high, as befits a god. Since this position places the infant's head well above your nipple, it gives the baby, when a little older, the freedom to nurse whenever he or she wants (Plate 9).



Plate 9. A Balinese baby is a god. As befits a god, the child's head is to be kept high at all times – even while breastfeeding. Photograph by Bernadette Waldis, reprinted courtesy of Urs Ramseyer, Museum der Kulturen Volkerkunder Museum, Basel.

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Weaning will be an important milestone for your child. It used to occur around the birth of the next child and marked the new status of “knee baby” – an infant who can climb onto your knee rather than constantly being held. However, with family planning, your children may be spaced further apart, so you will have greater choice about when to wean your baby. There is no particular age that is the “correct time” for doing it. Generally, weaning can be done gradually, and since you will have fed your infant porridge and food in addition to breastmilk from the very beginning, it should not be upsetting. If you need to wean your child in a hurry because you are pregnant and your new baby will come soon, you can coat your breasts with hot or bitter herbs or a mixture of lime and sugar.

If you don't get pregnant again while your child is a toddler, the child may gradually wean him- or herself. For boys, this is likely to happen around three or four years, as they become more independent. Sons of a farmer, for example, start to go to the fields with their fathers at this time. Of course, boys are not always able to work with their fathers these days, since many men now have paying jobs away from the fields. In the old days, girls tended to stay close to their mothers to help with other children, so they continued to breastfeed a bit later than boys. Nowadays, however, many women also have jobs that take them away from the home. If this is the case with you, you may have to wean all of your children early.

Otonan Ceremony

The *otonan* ceremony is performed on the first birthday, which comes 210 days after birth. It marks a very important transition – your child's departure from the divine world and entry into the human world. The main purpose of this ceremony is purification and the provision of spiritual strength. Your infant will be given a cap to protect the fontanel and prevent evil spirits from entering. For the first time, you will place your child's feet on the ground, acknowledging your child's full entry into the human world from the divine world.

Understanding Good Health

Good health depends on a delicate balance between the body and the *bayu*. A strong *bayu* can withstand many illnesses, especially those caused by black magic, but also those resulting from natural factors. As a mother, you need to take good care of your own *bayu* through a properly balanced and composed diet. Too many hot foods (such as meat) will overenergize your *bayu* and throw it off balance. On the other hand, too many cold foods (such as sweet potatoes, sugar, apples, and most vegetables) may stiffen your *bayu* and make it rigid and inflexible. So don't overdo either.

The *bayu* also needs calmness and no worry. Forgetting and not caring provide calm, which will strengthen your *bayu*. Anger, envy, jealousy, and taking offense are morally wrong and will weaken your *bayu* and leave you and your child vulnerable to sickness. Strive to be relaxed, avoid disappointment and anger, and forget bad things.

Children are especially vulnerable to afflictions of the *bayu*, and you actually pose the greatest danger to the health and life of your infant through nursing. A mother's *bayu* flows in her blood, which produces her milk. Anything that is unexpected, startles you, or upsets your balance and composure can be detrimental. Any negative emotion you experience can make your milk too hot and life-damaging for your child, or it may even stop flowing. Children very often die because mothers have been startled, angry, or sorrowful! Even unexpected happiness may endanger your child's life. That is why it is very hard to be a mother, and you must carefully manage your emotions.

If you do become upset or startled, you can do things to keep the harmful emotions you experience from passing on to your child. You can rid yourself of the bad milk by drinking cold water and washing your breasts with cold water. Then empty your breasts three times before feeding your child. You can also try rubbing your scalp and forehead with a special grass known for its cleansing powers. Another remedy is eating *kalisasuan*, a certain spider's web. Should you neglect these remedies, your child may cry, get sick, and lose appetite. If any of these symptoms occurs, seek help immediately from a *balian*.

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It is important to realize that your husband's negative emotions can affect the health of your child by making you upset. Encourage him to be happy and calm so that he does not adversely influence your emotions. Avoid all people who express negative emotion.

Curing Illness

If you or your child are ill, you can consult either a medical doctor or a *balian*. A *balian* has many advantages over a doctor. A *balian*'s main goal (at least according to some) is to treat illnesses connected with a person's *bayu*. Since *balian* treat both supernatural and physical causes of illness, they have a much better chance of diagnosing and curing illness than medical doctors, who prescribe treatments for symptoms without addressing the underlying cause. Medical doctors are good for the relatively rare ailments that have a purely physical nature, but *balian* take into account the state of the patient's *bayu* and treat invisible forces that cause the symptom, such as the sibling spirits, ancestors, past life issues, gods, demons, witches, and so forth.

Balian also have the advantage that they accept whatever one can pay, and medical doctors are generally five to ten times more expensive. If you decide to consult a doctor, the doctor must actually see your child, but the *balian* can diagnose and cure a child without seeing him or her. This is possible because the *balian* can intervene with the spiritual world on behalf of you or your child. So, if your child is ill, consult either a *balian* alone or both a *balian* and a medical doctor.

The *balian* will identify your child's symptoms, explain what has gone wrong, and prescribe a remedy; depending on the problem, this might be holy water, potions, amulets or charms, or certain foods. In addition, the *balian* will divine what rituals need to be performed to appease angry gods, ancestors, or evil spirits. The *balian* will probably make offerings and pray on your behalf as well.

A special advantage of the *balian* is their ability to determine if your child's illness is actually caused by the faults or bad characteristics of the ancestor who is reincarnated in the child. This could occur if the ancestor's family had failed to perform the *meseb*

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larwang, the ceremony that erases physical faults or bad characteristics of the deceased so these traits cannot be reincarnated in a baby.

Emotional Control

A very important part of parenting is teaching children how to control their feelings. Being able to manage the heart will help your child solve problems independently, and this will allow your little one to become a productive member of our society.

Your young child will experience strong emotions and may throw tantrums. Your job is to help him or her learn how to remain calm even in the face of upsetting situations. When the child is around 21 months, one thing you can do is to “borrow” a young baby from someone. Play with the baby or even let the baby nurse from your breasts, while your child watches. Of course, this will make your child feel jealous, and a tantrum may ensue. Don’t become angry or punish the child – indeed, don’t react strongly at all. This will encourage your son or daughter to find a way to deal with the natural feelings of jealousy. Then, the next time you “borrow” a baby, your child may react more calmly and may even play with the little one. Be sure to convey how proud you are of this new, appropriate behavior. This is a first step to becoming emotionally mature and self-confident, and a sign that your child will make a good older brother or sister to your next baby. If you use strategies such as this one, by the age of three or four your child will have developed equanimity in the face of provocations, disappointments, or frustrations.

You can also talk directly to your child about how to express emotions. Encourage your son or daughter to be quiet and polite both at home and in public. Even positive emotions should not be displayed in public. For example, a child who receives an award at school should feel happiness in the heart but not express it overtly. By the same token, if your child is frightened of a stranger or a strange situation, advise your little one not to reveal that fear. Likewise, do not permit children to fight over toys. If a conflict does arise, the older child should always be reprimanded and instructed to give in to the younger one. If your children complain of taunts or

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mistreatment from other children, tell them to rise above such pettiness and just forget the incident.

In short, you should always encourage calm in the face of trouble, and discourage any display of strong emotions. Explain that not caring about disappointments will produce physical well-being, as well as personal satisfaction and self-respect. This is the greatest gift you can give your child.